



Brittany Hill Middle School

District: Blue Springs Reorganized IV School District

Enrollment: 853

Grade Range: 6-8



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The administrators, teachers, students, and families of Brittany Hill Middle School are committed to fostering lifelong active learning, high academic performance, and positive self worth through an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect.

Brittany Hill Middle School thrives in a city of approximately 55,000 residents on the eastern edge of the metropolitan Kansas City area. The city motto, “The City of Cooperation,” carries over to the school and is tangibly evident as parents, students, staff, business partners, and community patrons work together to provide quality learning for Brittany Hill’s 853 students. This spirit is a driving force behind the school’s success. Brittany Hill’s sixth, seventh, and eighth graders come from a somewhat diverse neighborhood of families representing a cross-section of educational, occupational, and socioeconomic levels. BH houses the district’s Cognitive Adaptive Behavior Deficits program, giving full inclusion to special needs students based on the least restrictive environment.

Becoming a Model Middle School

The Blue Springs R-IV School District gave its support to the middle school concept by building and opening Brittany Hill Middle School in the fall of 1994 as a facility designed both physically and philosophically to address prevailing research on the curricular, emotional, and physical needs of the middle level child. The facility, its curriculum and staffing design, and mission provided the model for the district as it built three additional middle schools in the nine years that followed. The school remains focused on the middle school concept and continues to investigate, evaluate, redesign, and implement instruction that accommodates the whole student.

Rooms are situated in grade level pods to group and focus on students and to allow teams of teachers to be close to one another. Concurrently, teachers and administrators have reshaped teaching styles and administrative roles to move BH to the philosophical forefront of action-based research and collective inquiry. Working in their grade level teams, teachers incorporate innovative teaching strategies (many cross-curricular), critical thinking skills, hands-on experiences, cooperative learning opportunities, alternative performance assessments, interdisciplinary units, and technology into every classroom. On any given day, students can be found outside working in a garden, walking through trails at a nature center, digging for worms for math probability studies, or traveling on a French-speaking safari. The school’s mission is at the heart of each day’s activities.

Fostering a Professional Learning Community

A quality professional staff serves Brittany Hill Middle School. Ninety-nine percent of the teachers classify as “highly qualified teachers” under the guidelines of national and state legislation. Staff members model lifelong learning with 71 percent of the teachers earning advanced degrees. Teachers average 13 years of

“BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION...”

- ***Eagle Time***– The Eagle Time advisory program provides students a safe peer environment and a way to begin their day in a supportive setting. Each day, students meet with their advisors and address issues such as respect and listening to others’ opinions.
- ***CLEEO*** – The Campus Law Enforcement Education Officer (CLEEO) who is a member of the Blue Springs Police Department’s Youth Outreach Unit, provides a variety of programs for students and serves as a liaison between school and community.
- ***Community of One*** – A class project in BH’s academic skills course allows students to assume job responsibilities by completing a mock job application in hopes of securing employment. Students learn how to write checks to pay bills and purchase life-sustaining goods and services. Students must also maintain an accurate checkbook.

experience. BH faculty and staff consider themselves risk-takers who are willing to ensure students the best education possible. Teachers actively involve themselves in professional organizations. Many present at district, state, and national conferences, teach at the college level, serve on state committees to define assessments for Missouri’s children, and earn state and national recognition.

Brittany Hill’s administrator fosters a professional learning community by challenging staff to excel and lead in their fields of expertise. “Critical friends” groups allow teachers to use protocols for analyzing student work and linking teacher practice to student achievement. A book club brings teachers together to discuss professional readings and research. Teachers, in curriculum groups, collaborate regularly through text-based discussions; they study “best practices,” read current concepts, and relate them to the middle level philosophy. Professional Development Committee monies are available to each teacher for yearly training.

“WORDS OF WISDOM”

- ***“...when students learn to power write, they develop a skill which becomes an integral part of their daily writing experience, whether for school, activities, or personal use.”***
- ***“Each year, the building adopts a school-wide academic theme that all classes immerse into the curriculum.”***
- ***“Focusing on active learning prepares students for a complex and diverse society.”***

Promoting Positive Parental Involvement

Brittany Hill Middle School operates under the premise that parental support and involvement are imperative to student success. The positive link between school and home is evident when one walks through the doors at Brittany Hill. Parents’ active involvement in their children’s education includes, but is not limited to, volunteer efforts, PTSA event attendance, participation in all school activities, and conference attendance. Faculty and staff promote positive home/school communication in a variety of ways. Daily plan books allow students to “learn to plan by planning to learn” and provide a communication link between school and home. At mid-semester, using student-led conferences with parents and teachers, students present and reflect on their class work. At the end of each year, students share writing portfolios with their parents. As a result of these ongoing communication efforts, Brittany Hill enjoys considerable support from parents. Students do their homework because teachers expect it to be done and parents guarantee it will be done. Parents participate in school and district planning for curriculum, strategic planning, and advisement.

Brittany Hill Middle School takes pride in being a student-centered, innovative school. Focusing on the whole child, the staff gives each student opportunities to develop academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and morally.